1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

entirely in caves; trading places called *wadia* near the caves, but out of sight of them, under a tree or rock, were used for bartering, where all strangers would stop and shout and then wait until their calls had been answered from the caves.

The Veddas were extremely jealous of their women, and intimate as our informant was with them as a young man, he was never taken to their caves while their women were there. The wilder Veddas could not count, at least they used no numerals beyond one, the method being to say "one" "and one" "and one," etc., probably putting a piece of stick on the ground or making a mark for each unit mentioned. Both hands with fingers extended were held up for ten, or perhaps for any number above six. The "silent trade" was only a tradition even among the wildest Veddas and had probably been extinct in this part of the country for at least two generations. The wilder Veddas had no areca nuts but chewed the bark of trees mixed with lime which they obtained by burning land shells which they called *wantako*.

Cousin marriage took place, the unions being arranged by the parents of the young people. Honey, dried venison and flesh of the monitor lizard were brought by the young man to the girl's father[1], who would call his daughter and give her in charge of her husband, for whom she would immediately make a waist string (*dia lanuwa*). She made no pretence of running away from her husband. Widows married an unmarried brother of their first husband if this were possible, in any case they might remarry and their sexual morality was as high as that of unmarried girls.

The wilder Veddas of the district belonged to the Morane and Unapane *waruge*; each clan had its own set of caves, though, since their members intermarried, there could have been no rigid exclusiveness about the arrangement. There were people of Uru *waruge* at a little distance; their status was lower than that of the Morane and Unapane folk, neither of whom would marry into this clan, and it was even said that the men of

[1] It was not clear whether more than one formal present of food was made; it must be remembered that a youth always gives part of any important kill to his potential father-in-law, cf. p. 67.

425 with a hill on it containing a cave called Maraliyagalge and a
431 number of *kumburu* colonies. He was also given a number of
583 pools in a river in Damanagama[1].

Handuna of Godatalawa on his marriage was given a hill with a cave in it called Balugalagalge. This was handed over to him by his father-in-law and the gift carried with it the sole right to take rock honey on the hill, which was known to be the home of six swarms of *kumburu*. Kalra Hadabandar son-in-law of Handuna of Godatalawa received on his first marriage a big pool in the Tota Oya river.

When Kumi the sister of the Vidane of Bandaradowa married Tissahami, the bride's parents made over to her the hill Rajahala near Walimbagala, upon which there were about ten *kumburu* colonies. Kumi also received Naile Kotawala, a stretch of pool—we could not determine which—in the Kalugal Oya. They also gave her husband the hill called Kuda Rasahala upon which six combs of the rock bee were known.

When Badapisi married, her father gave her husband Sinawa a hill called Bala Attahala on which there were known to be eight *kumburu* colonies and a pool called Adaiawala in the Kalugal Oya.

Tissahami the Vidane of Bandaradowa received on his marriage the hill Maha Yakini Hela, upon which there were over twenty known *kumburu* colonies[2].

With regard to these gifts of land we must record that although a man divides his landed property equally between his children in preparation for his death, property given at marriage to a son-in-law is counted as the daughter's share when the time comes for a man to make his final disposition.

423 When the land belonging to a Vedda group was not defined by natural features, such as a stream or hill, a mark representing a man with a drawn bow was cut upon the trunks of trees along the boundary line. It is doubtful whether these marks are

[1] We believe this was a small stream, and the right to fish in it was not highly valued, partly perhaps because not many fish were caught, but also because Veddas do not often eat fish when they can get other food.

[2] The numbers of colonies of rock bees mentioned in these statements are probably inaccurate, except perhaps in the case of the Bandarawa hills, for most Veddas hesitate confirmed when attempting to count above five or six.

[423]

151 Our observations on Sinhalese were very limited, but led us to consider that the acuity of hearing of the peasant Sinhalese between the ages of 30 and 40 did not excel that of Europeans, for although a few individuals had a higher acuity than ourselves, the majority fell below us.

Enumeration.

802. 134 This is a convenient place to refer to the question of counting. With regard to village Veddas our observations confirm the experience of others that the village Veddas have adopted the Sinhalese numerals, which they use correctly, at least up to 20, but we cannot say whether they are equally accurate when using higher numbers. This facility in counting is not found among the wilder Veddas whose method among themselves on the rare occasions on which they wish to express a definite number is to take small pieces of stick and lay them on one side saying as each stick is put down *ekemai* "that is one." Beyond this the wilder Veddas have a slight knowledge of the meaning of the Sinhalese words for the lower numbers. Handuna of Sitala Wanniya made no difficulty in picking out 2, 3, or 4 pieces of stick from a heap on being given the Sinhalese number; the Sinhalese words for 5 or 6 (though he said he knew them perfectly well) led to hesitation and sometimes to failure in picking out the correct number, while larger numbers obviously failed to convey any precise idea to him. Although we interrogated only two other elderly Veddas of the wilder groups on this matter the results we obtained from them were so like those given by Handuna that we do not hesitate to accept his behaviour as typical of the old members of the less sophisticated groups of Veddas, and in support of this view we may refer to p. 33 on which we have stated the information given on this point by a very old Sinhalese informant. We do not attribute the Vedda inability to count to any lack of intelligence but simply to their having little need to be practic in the matter of numbers[1].

[1] For further information concerning this point cf. *Ancient Ceylon*, pp. 66 and 67.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

192 As may be supposed, the vocabulary of such a barbarous race is very limited. It only contains such phrases as are required to describe the most striking objects of nature, and those which enter into the daily life of the people themselves. So rude and primitive is their dialect that the most ordinary objects and actions of life are described by quaint periphrasis. As, for example, to walk is "to beat (the ground) with hammers"; a child is "a bud"; the grains of rice are "round things"; an elephant is not inappropriately termed "a beast like a mountain"; while the fallow deer of the island (*Axis maculata*) are, with the strictest accuracy, called "spotted animals"; and wild boars, "long-mouthed ones."*

They use none of the honorifics so profusely common in Singhalese, the pronoun "*to*," "thou" being alone used, whether they are addressing each other, or those whose position would entitle them to outward respect. They can neither read nor write, nor 212 can I trace the faintest vestige of their ever having possessed any literature, in the lowest sense in which that word can be used.† 202 They count with difficulty on their fingers, and so little notion 205 have they of time, that it is difficult to make them understand that they are to keep an engagement at a more remote period than the next day.

I have compared the scant and unsatisfactory collection of 197 words, which I have been able to make, with almost all the vocabularies of the aboriginal tribes of India, published in the *Asiatic Society's Journal*, and though in some of them I have found isolated instances of striking resemblance, these are probably merely accidental. The subject is one which requires further investigation: and a careful examination of the dialect, by any one competent to perform the task, would be interesting, although I question if it would elicit more than we at present know of the origin of the Veddahs.

I append to this paper, as a specimen of their patois, a list of some of their words, distinguishing between those which probably

---

* It is very curious that the Veddah term for the Ceylon elk, the Samba deer of India (*Rusa Aristotelis*), is "gawra," *vide* Tennent's remarks in his *Natural History of Ceylon*, p. 49, on the tradition of the former existence in Ceylon of the "Boe gaurus" of Hindustan. I have myself heard the "gaur" described by old Kandyans, who have seen it in the mountain forests, as an animal with, as it were, the body of a buffalo and the legs of an elk. And there are many places still bearing the name "gaura," as, for example, besides gaura eliea, mentioned by Tennent, gaura kelle—the forest of the gaur—gaura kanda; and there is a kind of grass called gaura maanla. It is curious that the elk should be called gaura by the Veddahs, and by no one else.

† About ten years ago, the Government established a school for the Veddahs of Bintenne, but it proved a failure.